

STATE OF MICHIGAN

Family
Independence
Agency

Nov-Dec 2002

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FIA web site lists absent kids

**Agency partners with police, court to list children
Site had more than 14,780 visits through October**

The FIA began a new web site Sept. 16 that contains information about, and when available, pictures of Michigan children who have been reported to law enforcement as runaways or potential abductions. The site is <http://www.michigan.gov/fia> and click on **"Help us locate these kids"**.

The site was developed collectively with the Office of the Governor, Michigan State Police and Michigan courts.

The FIA announced a new toll-free phone line, **1-866-729-0026**, where citizens can call with information on any youth highlighted on the site.

Through October the web site was being visited frequently by Internet users as the site had 14,780 "hits" or visits. The toll-free line has logged more than 133 calls resulting in 37 reliable tips and five youngsters being returned to legal placement.

"We are pleased the public is responding to this important issue," said FIA director Douglas E. Howard. "The location and safety of these children is our No. 1 priority."

Court rules drug testing OK

Governor hails federal court decision allowing FIA to renew drug testing for public assistance applicants

Governor John Engler hailed the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals' decision lifting an injunction against drug testing public assistance recipients, as a condition of eligibility. The Governor called for testing welfare recipients for illicit drug use as a condition for Family Independence Program (FIP) eligibility in his 1999 State of the State address.

"I am extremely pleased that the court has acknowledged the right of the state to test welfare recipients for illicit drug use as a condition of receiving benefits," said Engler Oct. 18. "We know that drugs are a significant barrier to employment, and testing and treatment for welfare recipients for drug use is consistent with our goal of helping them reach true self sufficiency."

Under this testing program, those who test positive for illicit drug use will be provided with appropriate treatment; only those who refuse to take the test or refuse treatment will be denied FIP benefits.

"I am pleased that the court has returned our ability to address this barrier to job placement and retention," said Family Independence Agency Director Doug Howard. "This approach is the right thing to do to support our customers entering the workforce."

At time of announcement, the state was reviewing the next steps to take to reinstate the pilot drug testing program.

From the Director

By Douglas E. Howard

Director, Family Independence Agency



Is it worth it? The eyes have it!

I wanted to do something a little different for this column. This may be best described as random thoughts clustered around a theme. Thank you for indulging me in these random thoughts.

For many of us, passion and commitment define our jobs. That passion and commitment are shaped by the many images and experiences we see through our eyes over the years. There are days where those images and experiences may raise questions where each of us ask, "Is it worth it?" Some images and experiences that have shaped my passion and commitment, as seen through my eyes:

The 17-year old girl in a voluntary rehab program. She indicated she wanted to try a "long-term" commitment to rehab, and said she had been "dry" for "quite a while." It was a Wednesday night when we talked; she had not had alcohol since Saturday and crack cocaine for eight days. She was out on the street within two weeks.

Seeing the cold and distant eyes of an abused child. Seeing deceased children. Seeing troubled youth that cannot tell me one goal or aspiration in their lives. Seeing self-imposed and self-perpetuated failure in the eyes and face of the youths.

Hearing and seeing a mother scream at me at the top of her lungs. She didn't like my answer. How could the four-year-old in her arms sleep through that?

Seeing the eyes of individuals who made either direct or indirect threats to my well being. Reading threatening mail.

Seeing the effects of alcohol and drug abuse.

Seeing the food assistance recipient at an event as the most important person there. Seeing and hearing her reaction as she expressed embarrassment at not being dressed appropriately for all of us "important" people.

Seeing the anger in the eyes of a (very large) father who stormed out as he was threatening to kill her. Hearing the panic in the mother's voice when we called.

Reading media reports, letter to the editors, and editorials that chastise the system and the thousands of tireless workers in it.

Seeing complaint letters and phone messages on problems.

Is it worth it? Some days are harder than others.

Seeing the many eyes at the many Achiever of the Month ceremonies. The excitement in the voice and eyes of a welfare recipient talking about her first successful job or educational achievement, and how the hard work paid off not just for herself, but also for the children.

Looking out and seeing tears in the eyes and smiles on the faces of those who helped an Achiever. Hearing one of the most compelling stories of despair to success I have ever heard, and until then, never having seen a room of over 100 adults so quiet in my life with tears in the eyes of nearly every man and woman in the room.

Seeing pride in the eyes of the Achievers' children and knowing we are defining success or failure for multiple generations. Hearing a family talk about their first home resulting from their hard work.

Seeing the eyes flickering from dark to sparkling as a domestic abuse survivor tells me her story in graphic detail. At the age of four, she watched her mother get murdered. She nearly got trapped in the same cycle but has now managed to take control of her life and her childrens.

Reading a thank you letter from someone who used to be on a caseload when I was a worker. Reading a personal thank you letter from someone who is or was part of the system and has never met me. Reading a thank you letter for a staff person who cared and made a difference.

Seeing children who are in a safe environment, maybe for the first time in their life, and headed toward permanency. Seeing the smiling eyes of the adoptive family. Seeing a child experience reciprocal love. Seeing a child get hugged.

Reading media reports, letters to the editor, and editorials that support us. (Yes, they do happen.)

Seeing troubled youths that tell me their plans to make a difference in the world. Hearing how a formerly troubled youngster is now a mentor or role model for others.

The surprise and pride in my eyes when at a public welfare reform forum I expect program participants to name either child care and transportation as the most critical factor in failure or success. The answer is...consistently...the push and support of a caseworker.

Seeing the sparkle in the eyes of a disabled or visually impaired person who has succeeded in work, education and life because he or she wanted to, because he or she was given a fair chance, and because he or she helped define what success is.

Seeing the pride and celebration in staff persons' eyes as they talk about a successful case on their caseload. Seeing even bigger pride in their eyes as communities come together and collectively work towards success and recognize and appreciate the value of partnership.

Is it worth it? You bet. The eyes have it. I hope you can see it in mine. I hope others can see it in yours.



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an appropriate Editorial Board member.

New FIA organization announced

The FIA announced its new organizational structure Sept. 27, administering agency functions through two deputy directors—one for operations, the other for field services. In addition, a new chief financial officer has been established. Another substantial change is administrative organization of the outstate service delivery network through 32 dual-county offices and 18 single county offices.

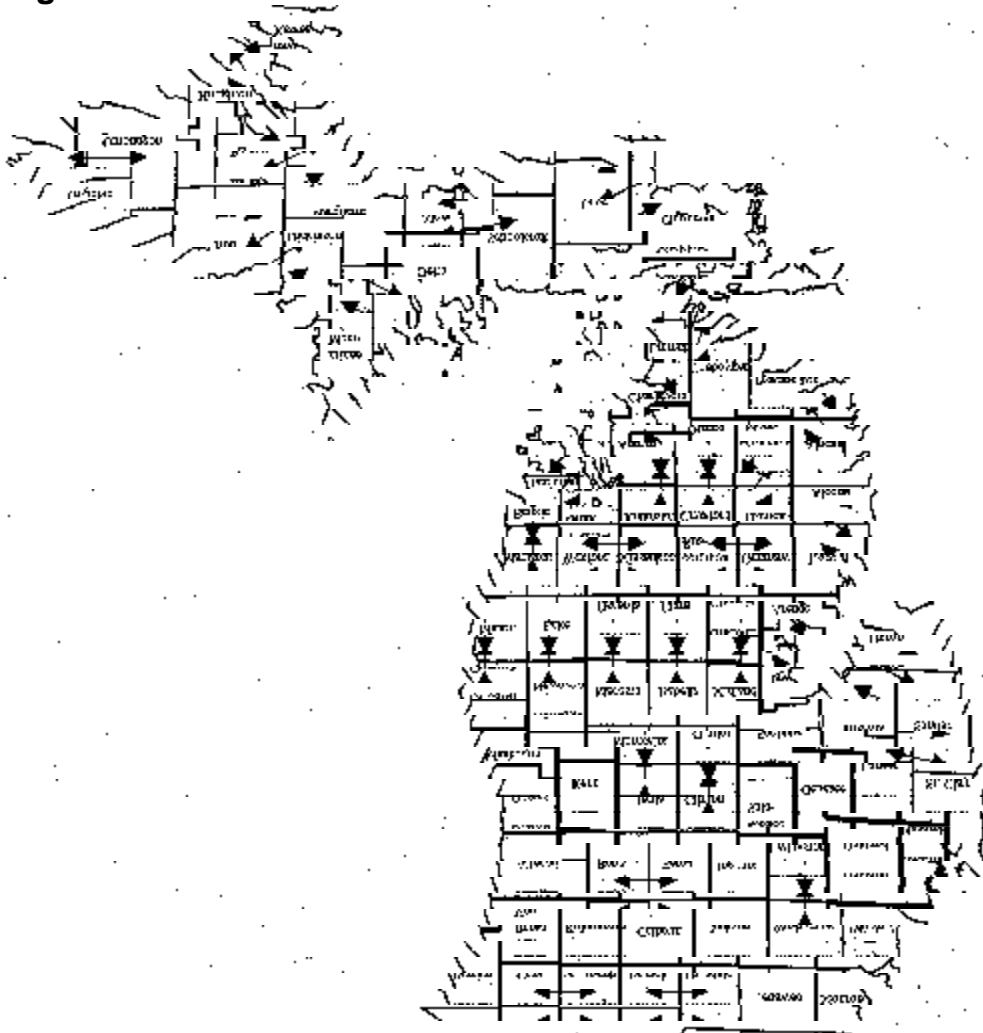
“I am confident that this structure will help the agency move forward with the challenges it will face in the future and will resolve some deficiencies inherent in the current structure,” said FIA director Douglas E. Howard.

The chief operating officer is responsible for budget, accounting, administrative services and other operational entities. A priority is coordinating quality control with field services to continue agency efforts to improve food assistance accuracy. The other major change is the Office of Juvenile Justice will report directly to the chief operating officer.

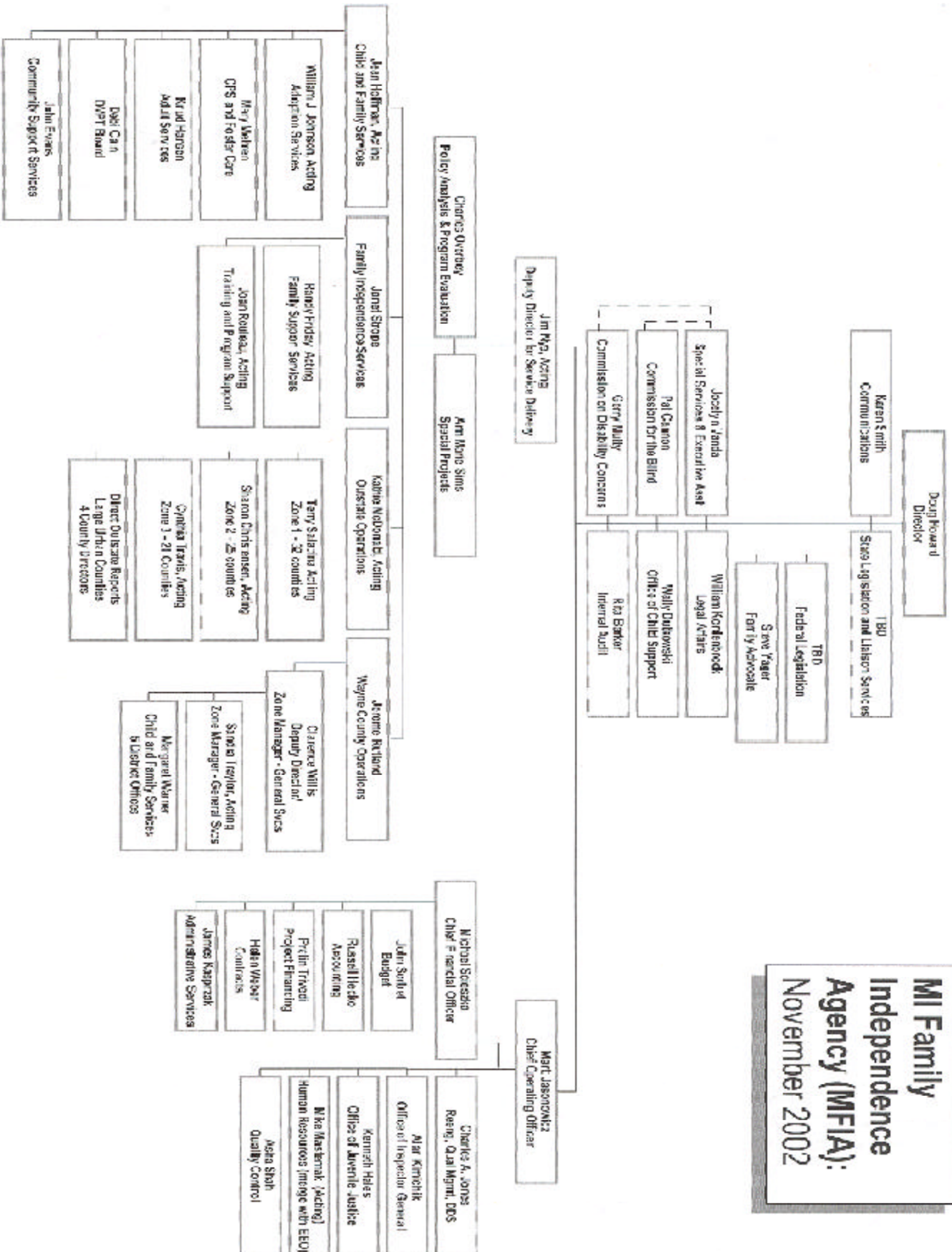
The deputy director for service delivery combines policy and procedures, resources and program expertise with the local office direct service and purchase of service delivery system. This will integrate policy development, delivery, analysis and evaluation for improved data-driven decisions and outcomes.

FIA Outstate County Delivery Network

Configuration effective October 2002



MI Family Independence Agency (MFA): November 2002



Mandy Rushlow & Jason Troop

Pair makes grade as Achiever of the Month for September 2002

By Jennifer Storey, Project Zero Coordinator

Luce County Family Independence Agency

Telephone (906) 635-4126 or (906) 293-0126

NEWBERRY—On Sept. 20 representatives from the FIA, Michigan Works! and well-wishers gathered at the Newberry Country Club to honor the 106th Achiever of the Month, Mandy Rushlow and Jason Troop. The celebration highlighted the extraordinary efforts of the couple to achieve independence from public assistance for their family.



Jason Troop and Mandy Rushlow

Luce County FIA director Kathleen Langhals began the ceremony recognizing Michigan Works! employees, FIA staff and other special guests. Langhals presented Mandy and Jason with a gift certificate and gift for their son on behalf of the Luce County FIA Board.

Getting going

Mark Jasonowicz, a native of the Upper Peninsula who was recently named the FIA's chief operating officer, was on hand to congratulate Mandy and Jason on their success.

"Mandy and Jason were determined to make sure the support would be temporary and only used to get them through a difficult period," Jasonowicz said. "They did not want to make public assistance a legacy for their son."

"They wanted Austin to believe that with determination and hard work he will be capable of achieving anything."

In an address Jasonowicz applauded the Luce County FIA, Eastern Upper Peninsula Michigan Works! -Work First program, Luce-Mackinac-Alger-Schoolcraft Health Department and local employers for making significant contributions to Mandy and Jason's success. Jasonowicz then awarded the couple with a certificate of recognition as the September 2002 Achiever of the Month and a gift certificate.

Continuing plaudits

Other special guests joined Jasonowicz in praising Mandy and Jason's accomplishments. Bruce Klusmeyer, the general manager at Mandy's employer, Snyder Drug, recognized her as a dedicated employee.

"Mandy is an excellent employee and the anchor of our cashier department," he said. "We hope to have her as an employee for a long time."

Dulcey Kantola, the couple's Work First case manager, continued the accolades. "Mandy and Jason had the desire within themselves to make their dreams happen," Kantola said. "The Newberry Community is benefiting from their roles as dependable employees, positive role models, and as caring parents."

Although unable to attend the ceremony, two state legislators sent their congratulatory messages. State Rep. Scott Shackleton of Sault Ste. Marie sent a resolution honoring their achievements, while Sen. Walter North sent a personal letter of recognition.

Rhonda Legault, Jason and Mandy's family independence specialist from Luce County FIA, congratulated the achievers on setting many goals for themselves and following through on each one.

"They have overcome tremendous barriers to achieve their goals," she said. "Jason continues to drive over 135 miles roundtrip daily to work. Mandy and Jason truly are dedicated."

Time warp

In March 2002, Mandy Rushlow and Jason Troop turned to the FIA for assistance. At the time the proud parents of 9 ½-month old Austin were extremely worried about being able to care for their son.

Mandy was unemployed and Jason had recently been laid off from a factory position due to downsizing. The couple had several barriers to employment. They

lacked reliable transportation and lived in a rural community that does not have many employers close to their home. To help them get regain economic stability, the Work First program assisted the couple with employment training classes, funds for gas, vehicle repairs, car insurance and interview clothing.



A little help from my friends. The achievers pose with some partners and well-wishers (from left): Cathy Chamberlain, family independence specialist at Luce County FIA; Jennifer Storey; Mark Jasonowicz; Dulcey Kantola, case manager from Eastern Upper Peninsula Michigan Works!; the achievers; Rhonda Legault, family independence specialist from Luce County; Luce County FIA director Kathy Langhals.

Referral to work

In April Jason received a job referral from Work First to Soo Plastics, Inc. in Sault Ste. Marie. He interviewed and was hired on April 10. He still works there today.

Jason has been named team leader three times since gaining his position in inspection and quality control at Soo Plastics. He is often lauded for his hard work and has been termed a “super employee”.

Mandy also found employment. On May 1 she began working as a clerk at Snyder Drugs in Newberry. She has been a diligent worker with a strong work ethic and often takes additional hours and has filled in numerous times for other employees.

Mandy and Jason’s FIP case closed in May due to their earnings. They currently receive only Medicaid assistance for their son. In the future Jason would like to pursue a career in building trades and Mandy would like to study pharmacy. Recently, they purchased their own home and plan to upgrade the property and build equity to assist Austin with his future.

Plaudits returned

During the Sept. 20 ceremony Mandy and Jason thanked their case workers—Rhonda Legault of FIA and Dulcey Kantola of Work First—and their employers for all their support.

“Thanks for the help with car repairs, gas, helping us out whenever we got into a jam, and for just listening too,” Mandy said. Afterward attendees enjoyed cake and punch while congratulating Mandy and Jason on all of their accomplishments.

Mandy and Jason truly are achievers. Their example will provide inspiration for many customers who have not yet realized their dreams.

Intercepted letters

Date: Sept. 19
To: Douglas Howard
Subj: Beth Knauf

I'm a radio personality at WMGC in Detroit and in recent weeks I've been talking on the air about my mother's failing health. It's been a very challenging summer, especially since she's lived in Fife Lake since the 1970s and steadfastly refuses to move downstate. One of the very important things I've been talking about on the radio is my new appreciation and understanding of the role a social worker can play in helping a family when an elderly loved one becomes ill.

In particular, I've been heaping praise on Beth Knauf of the Kalkaska (County FIA) adult protective services. We were referred to her by the social worker at Munson Medical Center. We've only known Beth since July...and vice versa...but she has been absolutely outstanding in her concern and assistance to my mother and my mentally handicapped brother who lives with her.

Without bothering you with the details, this has been a complicated situation. Through it all, Beth has been kind, caring and full of guidance and information. She has helped me to see the Family Independence Agency and the field of social work with new eyes.

When I was a TV reporter at WKBD in Detroit, I covered various news stories involving FIA. But I was never personally involved with FIA until my mother's health crises this summer. I have been glad to have the "bully pulpit" of my Morning Show on Magic 105.1 to talk about the ongoing situation with my mother and to urge my listeners to appreciate the incredible help a dedicated worker like Beth can offer.

I wanted to take the chance to offer these words of thanks and praise to Beth Knauf and FIA. She is a gem and I am grateful to her beyond words.

Cynthia Canty
Troy

■ Beth Knauf is a children's and adult protective services worker in Kalkaska County.

Date: Sept. 17
To: RaE Ann Loafman, Family Independence Specialist
Gladwin County Family Independence Agency, Gladwin
Subj: Thank you

Thank you so much for everything you've done for me today. I realize you must have a difficult job at times. Please remember that you do make a difference.

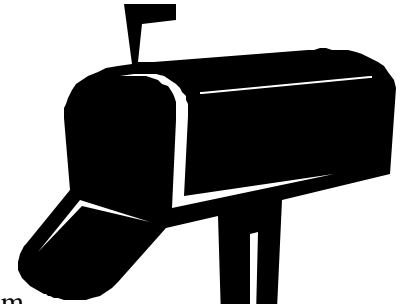
Sarah Lentz
Gladwin

Date: Sept. 16
To: Martha Tjhin, Manager
Families First of Michigan
Subj: Thank You!

To all of the Families First of Michigan trainers, specialists and administrators, THANK YOU! On behalf of our families, staff and Starr Commonwealth we appreciate your many years of support. This chapter of staff's life is ending but the memories will carry on.

All of you there, and many of your staff who have left in this area, have made us better workers and taught us well. I always reference the Families First of Michigan program as one of excellence, integrity and value. Keep up the excellent work on behalf of children and families.

Glen A. Johnson, Director of Programs
Staff Commonwealth
Benton Harbor



Date: Sept. 9
To: Marlys Schutjer, Acting Director
FIA Bureau of Juvenile Justice
Subj: Flint Community Justice Center

I wanted to let you know how much my staff and I appreciate the volunteerism and community spirit that we see from the young men housed at the Flint Community Justice Center. Under the leadership of Ken Marks, these guys have pitched in and helped us with many projects this year. They have helped us move storage...helped at our annual Crim Kids Classic Race...coordinated kids at the Tall Pines Council Boy Scout Jamboree in Davison...distributed refreshments at our Crim Training Group picnic...(helped with traffic control and set-up at the Aug. 24 Crim race) and unwrapped 6,500 10 mile medals for distribution at the race.

I'm sure I've overlooked other occasions when they have willingly agreed to give us a hand. We appreciate their assistance and are glad we can give them exposure to activities and events that are frequented by people committed to healthy lifestyle choices of running and walking for fitness. Ken and his guys are a joy to have around! They are always polite and helpful. We hope they've enjoyed the shirts and other recognition we are able to provide. Please do not hesitate to call if you have any questions or would like further information about this fine group of individuals.

Sherlynn Everly, Executive Director
Festival of Races
Flint

Date: Aug. 14
To: Grand Traverse FIA
Subj: Jon Pettit

I write this letter thanking your agency, specifically the service provided to my family by your representative, Jon Pettit. I have an older brother, Frank Spranger, who is a 51-year-old mildly retarded gentleman, who we have had to find an independent living placement due to a recent illness of our mother. Frank is pleasant (and) fully capable of living on his own. The need for housing was urgent. After six weeks of searching with the assistance of local agencies, no housing had been found.

It was suggested I call Jon Pettit. I explained my circumstance to Mr. Pettit, who responded by meeting with my brother and I. Within two hours Mr. Pettit had introduced us to the manager of the Aspen Hills limited dividend housing association, who began the process of application for Frank to reside in this development. It is an ideal setting for Frank, one he can afford and will be comfortable.

I regret I did not meet Mr. Pettit six weeks earlier. Had I done so, I would expect this letter would have been written at that time. I understand Mr. Pettit is retiring; I feel the community and state are losing a genuinely good public servant. Mr. Pettit's replacement will have a hard act to follow.

I close expressing the most sincere appreciation on behalf of my brother, the Spranger family and thanks for the people of your agency, especially Mr. Pettit. His kind are few and far between and it has been my pleasure to meet him.

Lt. David R. Spranger
Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Department
Traverse City

■ Jon Pettit was an adult services specialist at Grand Traverse FIA. He retired Sept. 30.

FIA people

Long-time FIA employee **Manuel “Manny” Gonzalez** died Sept. 8 after a brief illness. He was 58. “Manny was in (Lansing) Sparrow Hospital’s Intensive Care Unit for several weeks, surviving two major surgeries,” said **Knud Hansen**, his supervisor. “For those of us who worked with Manny, he will be remembered as the director of FIA Migrant Services and as a tireless advocate for the Hispanic community. He was a friend with a ready smile and helping hand. We will miss him.”



Manny Gonzalez

FIA Icon editorial board members **Anne Sinicropi-Sigourney** and **Anna Gallagher** retired Oct. 31. Anne represented the former Family Independence Services Administration and Anna represented the Office of the Director & Deputy Director.



Kathie McDonald

FIA deputy director for services delivery **Jim Nye** feted Iron County FIA for reaching zero at least once in 24 consecutive months—a time when all target FIP cases had earnings. “Congratulations on this remarkable achievement,” Nye said to Iron County director **Catherine Angeli** and acting Zone 1 manager **Steve Lieburn**. “This is particularly noteworthy in the current economic climate.”

FIA director **Douglas E. Howard** and Supreme Court Chief Justice **Maura Corrigan** were named co-recipients of the “Commissioner’s Judicial and Executive State Partnership Award” from the U.S. Office of Child Support Enforcement for commitment and leadership working to implement a statewide automated system and improvements in Michigan’s child support enforcement program.



Terry Salacina

The **FIA** announced numerous **management appointments** all effective Nov. 1 on an acting basis. They include **Jim Nye** as deputy director for services delivery, **Kathie McDonald** as director of outstate operations, **Terry Salacina** as Zone 1 manager, **Sharon Christensen** as Zone 2 manager and **Cynthia Travis** as Zone 3 manager. **Jean Hoffman** was appointed acting director of FIA child and family services.

New acting **dual county** director appointments include: **Mary Marois** at Grand Traverse-Leelanau county director; **Kathy Cholak-Jones** as Arenac-Bay director; **Bob Adams** in Gladwin-Midland; **Janice Baszler** in Clinton-Gratiot; **Nancy Sterk** in Oceana-Mason; **James McCormick** in Newaygo-Lake; **Howard Sweeney** in Isabella-Clare; **James Turner** in Lapeer-Sanilac; **Julia Hadas** in Baraga-Marquette; **Robert Roberge** in Dickinson-Iron; **Russell Sexton** in Delta-Menominee; **Douglas McCombs** in Alpena-Presque Isle; **Douglas Lapham** in Benzie-Manistee; **William Denemy** in Charlevoix-Emmet; **Vicki Dahl** in Alcona-Iosco; **Susan Fulton** in Mecosta-Osceola; and **James Beougher** in Livingston-Washtenaw. New acting **single county** directors include **Gwain McCree** in Calhoun County, **Douglas Williams** in Ingham County, **Samuel Chambers Jr.** in Oakland County, **Jane Johnson** in Muskegon County and **Kay Andrzejak** in Shiawassee County.

New district appointments or reassignments in **Wayne County** include: **Sandra Traylor** as acting Zone 7 manager; **Stephanie Miller** as acting South Central Child and Family Services (CFS) manager; **John Tarkowski** as acting Grand River-Warren manager; **Juliette Gregory** acting Redford District manager; **Michael Patterson** is Western Wayne CFS manager. The county closed the Kercheval-Townsend office and relocated CFS staff from the Midtown District, which now houses child support. Other Wayne County district manager appointments effective Nov. 1: **Barbara Madison** at Fullerton/Jeffires-Tireman; **Patricia Smith** is manager at Forest-Ellery and Warren-Conner; **Jackie Smith** acting manager at Glendale-Trumbull; **Barbara Nelson** at Oakman-Grand River; **Sharon Jackson** acting manager at Gratiot-7 Mile; **Rhonda Smith** at Greenfield-Joy; **Margie Young** acting manager at Hamtramck; **Joyce Johnson** at Highland Park and McNichols-Goddard; **Rochelle Allen** at Inkster; **Georgia Cambell** at Lafayette; **Barbara Borden** at Lincoln Park & Taylor; **Earnestine Morgan** acting manager at Medbury; **William Kennedy** acting manager at Schoolcraft-Stansbury.



Jim Beougher



Sandra Traylor

Recognizing first anniversary of "Lisa's law"

State, union recognize laws to support workers, provide training

The FIA, UAW and state Legislature recognized the one-year anniversary of "Lisa's law" during September. "Lisa's law", a package of state legislation aimed at providing training and protecting field workers, took effect Sept. 1, 2001. It was enacted after the death of Macomb County FIA Child Protective Services worker Lisa Putman, who was killed during a home visit in May 1998.

"Since Lisa's death, the governor, Legislature and the union have shown a deep commitment to enhance the safety of FIA workers who make home calls," said



Mary Ettinger

Howard. "Worker safety classes for FIA staff have been made available statewide. More than \$3 million has been spent on training, cellular phones, vehicle keyless entry-alarm devices and other safety tools."

Howard and United Auto Workers Local 6000 president Mary Ettinger jointly noted the first anniversary of the group of state laws that required the FIA to provide safety training for all employees who make home calls and making it a crime to impersonate, threaten or harm an FIA employee.

"Lisa Putman gave her life while serving the citizens of our state," Ettinger said. "Her devotion is typical of state workers who are dedicated to providing the best possible service."

"Lisa's Law has been a good first step toward protecting workers. Local 6000 looks forward to further partnership with the state to continue to provide excellent service while addressing worker safety."

Howard said the FIA works closely with law enforcement and county prosecutors to enforce the FIA's Zero Tolerance for Violence policy.

"During the first year of Lisa's law we had several incidents of worker threats and assaults that resulted in prosecution and jailing," he said. "We will continue to prosecute threats to our workers' safety to the full extent of the law."



Celebrating Lisa's law (from left): FIA director Doug Howard, UAW official Steve Shepard, state Sen. Alan Sanborn and Caroline Ross of the UAW gathered Sept. 19 to celebrate "Lisa's law". Sanborn was the prime House sponsor of the laws when he served in that body. A former UAW member who once worked with Lisa Putman, Sanborn was a Macomb County probation officer for 20 years.

Face time

Remember in "The Godfather" when the family attorney tried to convince a Hollywood producer to give someone a part in his upcoming film? The producer turned down the overture. The Corleone lawyer hurried home to deliver the news.

"Don Corleone insists on hearing bad news immediately," he said.

Organizational experts say the same thing when it comes to delivering bad news to working partners. One organizational newsletter said to make "face time" when giving bad news like poor performance problems. Sending such messages by voice mail or e-mail can lead to misinterpretation, experts say.

We know that big Hollywood producer got the message!

AmeriCorps: gone from FIA but not forgotten

Community service program ended for FIA at end of September “Graduates” pursuing careers, continuing to help in communities

By Janice Ferguson

FIA AmeriCorps Program Director
Telephone (517) 335-6420

Sept. 30 marked the closing of AmeriCorps participation in the FIA, a program that left indelible community memories.

Since 1993, Americans of all backgrounds helped strengthen communities through AmeriCorps. In 1996, the FIA was awarded a three-year funding to focus on health care outreach. A second three-year grant was awarded in 1999 that funded the Family Service Corps. The focus was to provide services mainly to at-risk foster children and juvenile justice youth. Eleven sites were selected for programs—Alpena, Cass-St. Joseph, Chippewa, Delta, Genesee, Kalamazoo, Luce, Newaygo, Ogemaw-Roscommon, Sanilac, and Wexford-Missaukee counties.

Community service

AmeriCorps members are not employees, nor are they volunteers. They typically serve a minimum of 1,700 hours over one year and receive a living allowance (excluded income) and an education award of \$4,725 at the successful completion of their term of service. Many AmeriCorps members in FIA grant-supported groups were recruited from our customer base. Because of that our program has traditionally placed a great deal of emphasis on member development, with focus on preparation for eventual self-sufficiency.

I was responsible for program oversight including conducting site visits. The local volunteer service coordinator provided direct supervision of the



Left: Two boys help out in a park cleanup during a Delta-Menominee County community service project.

Below: AmeriCorps member Heather and helpers decorate a trash barrel in a park in the same project.



members at each site. I met with them and members. Some of my most memorable visits include:

- A member casually showing me the newsletter she had created for foster parents in the community. She talked about importing information from web sites, creating crossword puzzles, and merging addresses for mailing describing some pretty advanced computer technology. She then said, “The best thing of all, I just got my GED!”

- Another member could hardly contain her excitement and enthusiasm and told me she knew she had the best job in the building.

- A third took responsibility for organizing an overnight camping trip to a remote island for foster children and staff.

There is no doubt that each of these AmeriCorps members will be missed. Every site expressed their appreciation for the valuable service.

Each year on Oct. 1 a new group of AmeriCorps

members started their term of service, with an expected completion date the following Sept. 30. Some returned for a second year of service for varying reasons – some wanted a second education award, some wanted to continue the momentum of a program they’ve begun, and some felt a second year helped them master skills.

Graduation ceremonies

At the beginning of each year, members were oriented to their term of service and at the end of each year members were “graduated” from their term of service. On Aug. 27-28, 21 members participated in the final graduation ceremony of the Family Service Corps.

continues next page

The Medicaid card is changing

mihealth card coming in January

Cards to be distributed statewide in phased rollout

Beginning in January 2003 a new permanent plastic Medicaid ID card called the “mihealth card” will be issued to every active beneficiary who has Medicaid, Maternity Outpatient Medical Services (MOMS) and Children’s Special Health Services (CSHCS).

The mihealth card will show the customer’s name and Medicaid ID number on the front. It will not contain eligibility information and will not guarantee Medicaid eligibility. Providers must use the Eligibility Verification System to verify eligibility before providing services.



Distribution Plan

The initial distribution of the mihealth card will be phased in over a three-month period, beginning in December and ending in February. Cards will be mailed in the following stages outlined below.

The beneficiary will continue to receive their blue paper Medicaid ID card during this phase-in period. Paper cards cannot be used after March 31. Beneficiaries who are in a Medicaid or CSHCS health plan will continue to also use their health plan ID cards when receiving medical services.

If a customer does not receive a card, or it is lost, stolen or damaged, he or she must contact the customer help line at (800) 642-3195 to request a card replacement. A customer with a name and/or address change will be referred to their local or district Family Independence Agency office so the case file can be updated.

After the address information has been changed on CIMS the customer should call the help line to request a new card. Replacement cards will be mailed within 48 hours.

County rollout schedule

Phase I mailed in January, card becomes active upon receipt: Alcona, Alger, Alpena, Antrim, Arenac, Baraga, Bay, Benzie, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Chippewa, Clare, Crawford, Delta, Dickinson, Emmet, Genesee, Gladwin, Gogebic, Grand Traverse, Gratiot, Houghton, Huron, Iosco, Iron, Isabella, Kalkaska, Kent, Keweenaw, Lake, Lapeer, Leelanau, Luce, Mackinac, Manistee, Marquette, Mason, Mecosta, Menominee, Midland, Missaukee, Montcalm, Montmorency, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Ogemaw, Ontonagon, Osceola, Oscoda, Otsego, Presque Isle, Roscommon, Saginaw, St. Clair, Sanilac, Schoolcraft, Tuscola and Wexford.

Phase II mailed at the end of January, card becomes active upon receipt: Allegan, Barry, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Clinton, Eaton, Hillsdale, Ingham, Ionia, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Lenawee, Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, Ottawa, St. Joseph, Shiawassee, Van Buren and Washtenaw.

Phase III mailed in February, card becomes active upon receipt: Wayne, CSHCS and MOMS.

AmeriCorps

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As part of the program, representatives from the Sault Ste. Marie and Kincheloe Girls’ groups, consisting of three 14-year-olds and one 15-year-old who had “earned” the opportunity to come to our meeting, gave a short presentation of their group activities.

After the presentation, the young ladies led an interesting walking tour of the Headlands, a 600-acre preserve along the Mackinac straits. The two-day ceremony and meeting ended with an emotional and inspirational awards ceremony where each site supervisor recognized individual members from his/her site and presented the members with a “diploma”.

While the FIA supported the program, grant funding ended Sept. 30. We wish all the members well as they start or continue college or head out to their new job or other form of service.

■ To learn more about AmeriCorps, visit their web site at www.nationalservice.org

Genesee team wins quality recognition award

New online tools merge system aspects, assist customers

By Jeff Traver, Section Manager

Genesee County FIA North District, Flint

Telephone (810)760-2689

FLINT – In the North District Office of Genesee County FIA, we were frustrated in our quest to reach Project Zero goals. Part of the frustration was the result of two data systems that didn't speak to each other. A new tool being used in the district helped us overcome that problem.

Finding a solution to that problem netted a North District team a \$1,500 award from the Quality Recognition System on Sept. 27. The award was presented during ceremonies in Flint.

Being one of the larger urban offices in the state, we had literally hundreds of FIP cases needing earnings. Keeping track of and coordinating our efforts with our partner in the Michigan Works! Agency was becoming unmanageable. Employable FIP cases were, at times, sitting for weeks and months with efforts and activities being conducted by neither FIA nor the MWA.

We felt we had to do something to get ourselves moving in the right direction.

We talked about what was causing the problems and what we needed in solutions. Our primary problem involved having two computer systems, CIS and MIS, which did not communicate with one another. CIS—the FIA online customer system—may appear to show the case active with Work First. MIS—the Michigan Works! Agency's system—may for the same case show no Work First activity, directly contradicting the coding on the FIA side.

People here needed to be able to see both sides at one time.

We took on the task of developing a spreadsheet program we could maintain and share with all the staff involved with the Work First program. This program was developed to show all zero income employable FIP cases with both of their status, CIS and MIS. Every zero income employable FIP case was classified on the report as being in one of three categories:

- Category one is “pending to attend Work First.”
- Category two “active in Work First Job Search.”
- Category three is “Work First Non-Compliance.”

The report tracks by date how long it takes to get a case into Work First. It tracks how long a case has been in job search. It tracks how long a case has been in non-compliance.

For internal customers, this report serves as a quick glance tool for family independence specialists to track where their zero income employable FIP cases are on a weekly basis. For first and second line supervisors, it serves as a tracking tool to insure no cases are “falling through the cracks,” so to speak. Assurance is given that no case sits for weeks without proper activity.

For external customers, the report is shared with the MWA contractor, who can quickly see any customers that are exceeding their proper time periods in the job search program. Our FIP clients are able to receive more efficient job placement services, which is reflected in much improved Project Zero numbers. Until the recent job recession hit the Flint area, we were able to have more than 90 percent of target cases employed, which was up from a rate of around 50 percent prior to the use of this new tool.



The Genesee North District team (l-r): County director Denise Chambers, Ledora Oglesby, Michelle Chockley, Lee Bowman, Jeff Traver and Mary Hitchcock. Not pictured: Cindy Chapman.

■ If you would like to know more about this innovative process, contact Cindy Chapman at ChapmanC2@michigan.gov

“Manager of the Day” concept helps staff, improves customer service

Genesee County improvement cuts waste, waiting, insecurity

**By Barbara Anders, Section Manager
Genesee County FIA McCree District, Flint
Telephone (810) 760-2477**

FLINT—On Sept. 27 the McCree District family independence managers were awarded a \$1,500 Quality Recognition Award in recognition of the “Manager of the Day” process implemented in that office. Genesee County FIA director Denise Chambers presented the award.

The Manager of the Day process was developed to address staff concerns about the inability to locate managers quickly when faced with a problem. This was most often an issue for the reception area when there were questions regarding applications or customer service for people at the receptionist desk. It was also sometimes an issue for family independence and eligibility specialists when their supervisor was in a meeting, working with another specialist, or temporarily unavailable for some other reason.

This sometimes resulted in a long wait for the customer while the appropriate supervisor was located.

The Manager of the Day concept has become a successful tool in the McCree District. By instituting the position, we eliminated the confusion and time wasted tracking down managers. Customers are served quicker since questions concerning applications and other issues can be handled by the Manager of the Day. Staff—our internal customers—also found it a time-saving device for the same reasons.

A Manager of the Day calendar is issued to all staff each month. It shows all scheduled out-of-office time for family independence managers and assigns one as the Manager of the Day. If an unexpected absence occurs, a replacement is assigned and all staff members are notified via email.

Because the calendar shows the entire month, FIM are able to schedule staff meetings and related events around their manager of the day.

Subsequent surveys of internal and external customers indicated this process has decreased customer waiting time in most instances. Receptionists indicated the system makes it easier for them to locate a manager when needed.



Genesee County team members (from left) Sandy Norton, Meriann Thomsen, Barbara Anders and Ron Logan, the McCree District manager. Other team members not pictured include Tom Cummings, Paul Zuhlke, Susan Owen-Kinsey, Janey Dillard, Greg Smith, Charlene Franklin, Molly Jacobs, Wren Valentine, Kathy Garbulinski and Pat Bentley.

■ ***If you are interested in process improvement and want to join Genesee County team in being recognized for process improvement contact Stan Parker, the FIA Quality Recognition System coordinator, by telephone at (517) 373-7984 or email parkers@michigan.gov***

JJOLT receives national attention

Online case system gets support from national visitors

By Shelli Massey and Merry Perkins

FIA Bureau of Juvenile Justice, Lansing

Telephone (517) 335-3489

The Juvenile Justice Online Technology—JJOLT or in spoken terms *Jay-jolt*—team hosted guests from the Child Welfare League of America Oct. 2. The meeting was a daylong informational meeting to review Michigan's online case management system for youths in the FIA juvenile justice system.

Guests included John Tuell, the national director of juvenile justice for CWLA and Sascha Lipszcenko, director of Systems Integration Management Institute. Chris Freund, Blair Tighe and Chuck Williams from Global Vision Technologies, the organization that designed the program, were also on hand.



Showing off JJOLT. FIA administrators and JJOLT team members participated in the Oct. 2 visit. Pictured left is Calvin Holt, JJOLT team specialist. Below are FIA juvenile justice administrators (from left) Kenneth Hales, Kurt Warner, Barbara MacKenzie and Marlys Schutjer. Hales was recently appointed director of juvenile justice services for FIA and MacKenzie was acting director at the W.J. Maxey Training School in Whitmore Lake at time of the event.

Visitor pledges support

Tuell and Lipszcenko came to spend a day learning everything they could about JJOLT and its potential. They were particularly interested in the collaborative efforts of the different agencies and organizations and how the issues of confidentiality and security have been addressed.



Access to JJOLT is being expanded to social workers in the county FIA offices, court detention facilities and courts. Data sharing with the prosecuting attorney offices, the Michigan Supreme Court Judicial Information System and the Michigan Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) are currently either in progress or under discussion.

Michigan is the only state that has the momentum to interface between its juvenile justice system and the federal SACWIS system. Tuell pledged to return to Michigan, if necessary, to help smooth the transition between connected systems. Speaking for CWLA, Tuell expressed interest and a desire to point to Michigan as a leader in this area. Other attenders included Kenneth Hales, who was recently appointed director of FIA Bureau of Juvenile Justice, a group of juvenile justice managers and the JJOLT team.

About JJOLT

JJOLT is a web based case management information system that enables the smooth exchange of information regarding Michigan youth among all the members of the treatment team involved with an individual youth. Information shared via the web includes demographic data, treatment plans, detention records, medical information, educational records, case files, and facilitates positive outcomes for youth.

Since JJOLT came online it has sustained significant growth and interest among providers across Michigan. The JJOLT system currently includes all FIA Bureau of Juvenile Justice-operated juvenile facilities and many of the privately operated residential facilities.

Adrian honors 70 years of service

Juvenile justice facility fetes workers for excellence, service

By Dennis Swiggum, Director
Adrian Training School, Adrian
Telephone (517) 264-1204

ADRIAN—Each year in October, the Adrian Training School hosts an “ox roast”, an event where students, staff, guests and dignitaries are invited to join in celebrating and recognizing the outstanding work accomplished by agency staff. The focus of this event is to honor staff selected by their peers to receive “Staff of the Year” awards.

Staff of the year and special awards

This year’s recipients are **Jerry Griswold** and **Cheri Parker**, youth specialists, **Laura Gutierrez**, nurse, and **Julie Warren**, communications assistant. Each received an “Employee of the Year” plaque and for one year they will have their pictures on display in the school’s Administration and Food Service buildings.

Two staff members, **Sue Keagle**, staff trainer, and **Kathy Bennett**, administrative secretary, received service recognition awards for 35 years of service. All but six weeks of those 70 years were served at the Adrian Training School. Attendees responded by giving standing ovations to each as they received their award.

Numerous certificates were given to those staff serving the agency above and beyond their normal duties as they worked on the various workgroups active at the agency. These included those working on the balanced and restorative justice, cultural diversity community, high performing organization, staff restraint and individual focus program work groups.



Kathy Bennett and Sue Keagle

Special visitors to 2002 ox roast



Mark Jasonowicz

This year’s ox roast was made special by the visits from FIA administrators Mark Jasonowicz, chief operating officer, FIA juvenile justice director Kenneth Hales and Marlys Schutjer, director of institutions and program development.

Jasonowicz shared words of congratulations to this year’s award winners as well as encouragement and support to those who provide such important services to the youth of Michigan. There were many other special guests from Central Office in attendance to provide support and encouragement to agency staff.

Guests from the local community who joined in honoring ATS employees included Lenawee County Sheriff Larry Richardson, JoAnn Claflin, director of Maurice Spear Campus, ATS Citizen Advisory Committee members Jae Guetschow and Dale Lane, the Lenawee Intermediate School District superintendent Steve Krusich.

Unique closing events

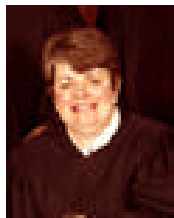
The event closed with youth specialist Joe Tindall singing the national anthem. Afterward the ATS drum and flag corps then led everyone to the ball field where a staff and youth game was scheduled. Unfortunately, the game was canceled due to unfavorable weather conditions but nothing else dampened a wonderful ceremony. As usual, the food prepared by the agency food service staff was exceptional and earned compliments from all in attendance.

The Adrian Training School is a closed medium security facility for adjudicated youth. It has a capacity to serve 120 youths, 60 males and 60 females. The 60 beds for males are sex offender treatment.

Wayne court starts absent children docket

Docket intended to assist efforts to locate foster children

Two dozen other courts subsequently ordered to do similarly



Maura Corrigan

The Wayne Circuit Court created a special court docket to deal with court wards that run away or leave assigned homes without permission. Supreme Court Chief Justice Maura Corrigan announced the new service Oct. 9.

The docket was assigned to Wayne County Circuit Court Judge Michael Hathaway and the first hearings were heard in October. Under this docket, the court will be prepared to subpoena family members and others who might have information on location of the missing children. It focuses on children up to age 15 with special focus on children 12 or younger.

On Oct. 31 State Court Administrator John Ferry ordered two dozen other state courts to develop similar services. "A number of children under jurisdiction of the family division of the circuit court are absent without permission," Ferry said. "Locating these children must be the highest priority."

The circuit court's family division had jurisdiction over cases of child abuse and neglect. Children who run away or have been taken from legal placements are under the court's jurisdiction.

"Priority should be given to cases involving children who are 15 years old or younger," Ferry said. He also said special emphasis should be given to cases of younger children who may have been abducted.

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